

Justice Department in Washington, D.C. in 1937. Returning to Portland in 1939, he joined the staff of the Museum Art School, where he taught drawing and painting until 1957. His signature on his work was C.H.V. His paintings were influenced by his extensive world travels—in 1925 he traveled to France, Italy, England, and Mexico; later he spent almost a year painting in France and Spain. Of course, his native Oregon is a major subject matter. His exhibitions included major art museums throughout the United States, including five one-man shows at the Portland Art Museum. Two years after his death in 1970, the Portland Art Museum held a retrospective exhibition of 175 paintings and drawings. The Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland has a lasting legacy to the artist—the Charles Voorhies Fine Art Library.

Voorhies Mansion Collection

At the Voorhies Mansion, “Neakahnie” (see previous page) hangs in the library of the family home that so bears the Charles Voorhies mark. A watercolor of Orcas Island hangs in the dining room. So to be added to the collection are two others: “Townscape” from 1944, with a bonus of “Tony Sleeping” on the verso. The mansion owners are interested in collecting other C.H.V. pieces.

The Voorhies Palette

Excerpt from *Oregon Painters: The First Hundred Years*, Ginny Allen and Jody Klevit, Oregon Historical Society Press, 1999:

“In the 1950s the mood in his series of Willamette Valley works was somber and darker in color than his previous palette, coinciding with a period of serious health problems. In 1958 he returned to France and Spain, where he painted for nine months and produced what Rachel Griffin [artist and longtime instructor at the Museum Art School] termed ‘the tall, golden oils of the Spanish sojourn.’ Upon his return, he continued to offer classes at a studio in his home in Portland. . . . [For the retrospective exhibition] Griffin recalled how line and brushwork became more rapid and confident as the years passed and his view of nature broadened and deepened. Voorhies considered Cézanne and Chinese landscapists to be strong influences in his painting. His line was calligraphic and figures were rare in his work. He said, ‘I approached painting by way of architecture.’”

Charles H. Voorhies (1901–70)

Photograph from the exhibition catalog from Portland Art Museum’s Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Charles Howard Voorhies, Spring 1972



The Voorhies Mansion
and Formal Gardens
at Eden Valley Orchards

An Abiding Legacy

Acknowledgments

This brief history of Eden Valley Orchards has been woven from the research and writing of several contributors. They include Stephen DeCoste, a freelance writer and history lecturer at Southern Oregon University; historian and author Kay Atwood, who developed the materials that led to Eden Valley Orchards being placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000; Anne H. Root, co-owner and general manager of Eden Valley Orchards; and Martha Bird Roberts, writer and editor. The reminiscences of Voorhies family members have been collected from their visits to the house. The research staff members of the Southern Oregon Historical Society continue to be helpful and enthusiastic in telling our story.

Definitely a work in progress, this is a draft document. Corrections, more information about the house and family, and other suggestions are welcome.

LIMITED EDITION

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TWIN PEARLS
Twin Pears Press
2310 Voorhies Road
Medford, Oregon 97501
United States of America

CHAPTER 7

C.H.V.

Charles Howard Voorhies: renowned artist and architect for the Voorhies Mansion



Neakahnie
1960
oil 48 x 24.5
In the collection of
Voorhies Mansion

“Neakahnie,” which was obtained by the current owners of the Voorhies Mansion in 2000, reflects the distinctive C.H.V. palette: light, bright blues, blue-greens, and darker greens, often balanced with ochres and pale cadmium yellows.

Charles, the son of Gordon and Helen Voorhies, longtime owners of the elegant house now known as Voorhies Mansion at Eden Valley Orchards, studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and California. He applied these studies to the remodeling of the family home in the early 1920s, using classic Colonial Revival Style elements favored by his Kentucky-born father. Voorhies Mansion remains little changed since Charles’s renovation, completed in 1925.

Although a promising architect, the real love of Charles Voorhies was fine art. After architecture training, he worked with Diego Rivera on the San Francisco Stock Exchange murals in 1930. He assisted Maruice Sterne with murals for the Library of the

Mrs. Stone's Room

Housekeeper Ida Stone occupied the small bedroom atop the backstairs; the room had an adjoining bathroom. Peter recalls an Eastlake sofa in her room. Mrs. Stone retired after Helen died and left her a small inheritance. The inheritance went fast, with the help of others, and she returned to service. As an incentive to stay even longer, the Voorhies family had the kitchen remodeled. The ploy failed. She didn't particularly like its modernity, and chose to retire for good.

*“Plant apples for your children and
pears for your grandchildren.”*

—Old Folk Saying

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Foreword

We are pleased to share this history with the individuals and businesses involved in spaces.one—the revitalization of Voorhies Mansion at Eden Valley Orchards. First is a broad-brushed look at the 150-year history of a parcel of land that changed southern Oregon and left a legacy of agriculture and hospitality that we still celebrate. Next we look at the Voorhies family a little more closely. And, third, a quick tour through the Voorhies Mansion describes how rooms were used and decorated in the past.

We welcome and appreciate the commitment of of the spaces.one team in making their impression on Voorhies Mansion as it begins a new century.

—*Anne H. Root*

February 2003

Linen Room and Other Closets

This sunny closet room has unique—and spacious—cabinetry that characterizes all the storage space in the house. Some of the closets have built-in chest of drawers, shoe racks, and other special features. Peter recalls some of the specific uses, including the Box and String Closet (wrapping supplies for every occasion) that also contained all cancelled checks and letters to Gordon and Helen from their children.

Mickey's Room

This small bedroom was used by Mickey, an au pair to the Voorhies children.

Charles Voorhies Suite

This room was occupied for some time by Charles when he was a child. Windows on three sides give wonderful light, and the fireplace is his design. This corner room offered a view of the old barn (now the EdenVale Winery) and later of Charles's art studio, which lay between the house and the barn. The studio burned down in 1950.

The little window nook in the anteroom to the bedroom contained an ancestral chess table, small enough for children to use comfortably.

The bathroom, like all others in the house, contains the original plumbing and light fixtures. A 1970s redecoration disguises what the room looked like in 1925.

Hall Bathroom

Since the other bedrooms on the second floor had their own bathrooms, this hall bath was probably used mostly by the au pair.

another.

Gordon's bedroom, above the north veranda, overlooked the entry lane, tack room, and carriage house, and he would have been able to hear and see arrivals to the orchard. In the 1925 remodeling, the house was changed to a Colonial Revival style of architecture, reminiscent of houses in Gordon's home state of Kentucky. The raising of the front portico roofline changed the view in these two rooms—previously the porch roof was under the east windows; after the remodeling, the top of the porch was raised to above those windows. It's hard to say what that did to the view, but it seems like looking out over the pear orchards in front (now coveted Seckel pears) and new formal gardens would have been a more panoramic view after the remodel.

In Gordon's room you see part of the wall removed, the result of a major bee resettlement program in 2001. The bee problem postdated the 1925 remodel, with the bees taking up long-term residency, according to one account, in the early 1960s.

In both bedrooms the original light fixtures were replaced by ones that are functional but that are antithetical to the Voorhies style.

South Guest Room

This room is special with its dutch door leading to a deck formed by the solarium roof. In this room, like many others, the light fixtures are original. Some of the silk sconces show their age, and others are remarkably intact. Peter recalls a Victorian chest with mirror. A melodeon (a kind of accordion) in the closet had been brought around the Horn by Thomas Frazar, Helen Burrell Voorhies's father or grandfather. Firm in his memory, too, is the sight of a St. Nicholas magazine.

North Guest Room

This guest room had twin beds with brass headboards. The shower in the adjoining bathroom, like others in the house, had a water-proof canvas lining.

CHAPTER 1

A Living Monument

Lying not far from railroad tracks and fruit packing plants that are emblematic of the shared bounty of the Rogue River Valley is Eden Valley Orchards. In many ways the surrounding scenery has not changed much since the first shipment of pears was made from this area of south Medford in the late 1800s. The picturesque hillsides, dotted with pear orchards and vineyards, still offer some of the most beautiful, bucolic scenery in the state—or in the nation, many would say.

Deeply imprinted on the area is the legacy of Joseph H. Stewart, Eden Valley's founder who became the patriarch of Southern Oregon's fruit industry. A prominent contemporary of Stewart's remarked, "Every fruit tree in Rogue River Valley will be a monument to his memory." Indeed, two dozen of the pioneer's original trees are still growing at Eden Valley Orchards, in a newly designated Joseph H. Stewart Heritage Orchard, and budwood from his original orchard started trees on large orchards throughout the Valley.

Stewart's orchard, established between 1885 and 1898, was expanded between 1899 and 1932 by Colonel Gordon Voorhies, ultimately growing to about 800 acres. That half-century period of orchard history encompassed the planting of the first Rogue River Valley commercial pear orchard on this land, the expansion of the orchard industry, and the industry's decline with the onset of the Great Depression. Members of the Voorhies family, who owned the property for most of the twentieth century, saw many other significant changes in the industry and their community.

At Eden Valley Orchards, another of Stewart's legacies remains. In continuous use by orchardists and their families since its

completion in 1898 is a large Colonial Revival Style house that Stewart built. Named for the family who bought the property a year later and owned it for the next 87 years, the Voorhies Mansion has been the literal and figurative heart of Eden Valley Orchards for over a century. Contributions to the community and gracious hospitality are hallmarks of the Voorhies era. They are traditions that continue.

Preceding Stewart and Voorhies was the Ball family, whose homestead remains on the Eden Valley property and which, after restoration, will live on as an interpretive center for the pear and wine industries in Southern Oregon.

together, and both aspiring artists. In the arbor is a Flame Tokay grapevine, which still produces large, robust grapes. Flame Tokays were the grape of choice for Rogue Valley winemaking in the first quarter of the 20th century. A 1912 promotional booklet for Medford said, "The yield of Flame Tokays is five to six tons per acre. . . . Tokays will net the grower \$60 per ton and Malagas \$50 per ton [\$1,095 and \$913 in 2001 terms]. California and other grape growing sections have their most formidable competitor in the Rogue River Valley. The famous vineyards of the old world cannot produce grapes of the superior excellence of those grown here."

When the pool was filled in (for liability and functional reasons) in 2002, the pattern of the "ballroom floor" was laid to mimic the rectangular panes of the tall bank of windows on the landing, a touch that would have won Charles's approval.

Ascending a flight further leads to a second floor filled with light-filled bedrooms, bathrooms, and an amazing number of closets. Another set of stairs leads to a full attic that Helen and Gordon's grandchildren remember as the proverbial exploration site, filled with unending fun.

Helen and Gordon Master Suite

The larger room was Helen's bedroom, connected by the "walk-through" closet room to Gordon's smaller bedroom. The adjoining bathroom served both. At this point, little has been passed on about the decor of these rooms.

To the south and east, Helen would have overlooked her new, beautiful garden rooms, highlighted by the grape arbor. Helen's spacious new swimming pool out there was either the first pool in Medford or one of the first.

Gordon's room is small and was Spartan in its furnishings, it seems. His grandson Peter said that probably reflected his military background.

Peter recalls the joy of seeing Gordon's military uniforms, boots, hats and other regalia in one closet, his polo attire in another, and his Chesterfield opera suit, capes, shoes, hats, and gloves in yet

“intercom” for summoning the staff—hung above the baking closet. (When it was not working, Helen used a small silver bell.) Somewhere in the room was a daisy churn.

Breakfast Room: Adjoining the kitchen was a sun-filled breakfast nook used by the whole family. It also served as a dining area for the children when they were not included at the formal dinners in the dining room.

Staples and Root Vegetables Room: This room, with a dirt-covered floor, was used for root vegetables, canned goods, and staples. With its two doors, it allowed stocking from the outside and retrieval from the inside.

Ice Box Alley: With their gorgeous hardware and unique doors for sealing, these ice boxes to many are among the most beautiful features in the house. Ice was loaded from the outside doors into the back of the “refrigerator”—ten 300-pound blocks at a time to last many months. Peter Voorhies recalls seeing chickens hanging there, as well as bottles of ginger ale. Eggs and cream were kept there, both for family and guests but also for selling.

Preserving Room: This room, which now serves as the office and reception area, served many utilitarian functions. This is where the chickens were butchered. Milk and creamery equipment was in here. And it was where the preserving of fruit and vegetables took place. Its cupboards were full of delicious jams and jellies, as well as a plentiful stock of preserved vegetables.

SECOND FLOOR

Stairs and Landings

The stairway through the portière speaks of the understated elegance of the Voorhies taste in architecture. Not ornate or ostentatious, the stairs and landings are carefully planned to please the eye. At the first landing, one notices the perfect alignment of the windows with the outdoor ballroom, originally the swimming pool. In the same alignment, at the back wall, is the grape arbor, the centerpiece of which is a bas relief done by a friend of Charles Voorhies (Helen and Gordon’s son who designed the house’s 1925 remodel; father of Peter). They had been architect students

CHAPTER 2 The Founders

Eden Valley Orchards rests on a former donation land claim in Jackson County, Oregon, that has been in cultivation since 1853. In those pioneer days of the Rogue River Valley, the parcel lay between two of the few established settlements, what would soon become known as Ashland Mills and Jacksonville. The original house on the 160-acre parcel was built in the 1850s by Addison and Martha Justus Ball. In 1885 on March 17, the same year the nearby town of Medford was incorporated, the land was purchased for \$5,400 by Joseph H. Stewart, an enthusiastic fruit dealer from Chicago. Coincidentally, Peter Britt the vintner was a mortgage holder on this land just prior to its purchase by Stewart.

The *Ashland Tidings* reported, “Mr. Stewart, recently from Illinois, has bought the Ball place near Phoenix and intends to put the whole of it in pears.” His western venture proved a very good move for Joseph Stewart and certainly changed the course of the Rogue River Valley.

Stewart, 52 years old and an Illinois legislator, was an experienced nurseryman as well as fruit dealer. He named his new enterprise Eden Valley Orchards. Exceeding the press report, he planted large quantities of apples, prunes, and almonds in addition to pears. His timing could not have been better, for in 1887 the Oregon–California railroad was completed, making it possible to ship large amounts of fruit outside the Rogue Valley. In 1890, Stewart sold the area’s first commercial carloads of pears to outside markets. He began construction of his house the same year which, after completion in 1898, would serve as the central structure for later additions.

By 1896, the output from Eden Valley Orchards was 95 carloads of pears and apples. Widely recognized as the “father of the fruit industry” in southern Oregon, Joseph Stewart had an extremely successful business. Stewart’s trees eventually provided budwood for many large orchards throughout the valley, including Hollywood, Hillcrest, and Oakdale Orchards. Eden Valley Orchards is still surrounded by other significant pear growers, including Naumes, Inc. and the famous Harry & David®/Bear Creek Orchards’ Royal Riviera Pears®.

After selling Eden Valley Orchards, Stewart became a pioneer banker in Jackson County, serving as the founding president of Medford’s first bank, originally named the Medford Bank and now U.S. Bank.

room after he became ill and could not maneuver the stairs. (He developed heart trouble in 1934.) Grandson Peter Voorhies recalls it having a big bed and bookshelves. The fireplace is Charles’s design, using a similar design to the one he used on the fireplace in the library.

From what is now the closet in the lounge was a hallway leading to Helen’s new bedroom—creating a two-bedroom suite similar to the original Voorhies Suite on the second floor. The first-floor suite had two bathrooms rather than just one. As his illness progressed, registered nurse Hazel Swain took over Helen’s room. Gordon died in 1940.

The Ladies Lounge serves as the Bridal Room for the many weddings held at Voorhies Mansion. (The Groom’s party uses the library.)

Kitchen Suite

Appropriate to serving a large family and numerous visitors, the Voorhies kitchen was a complex of multifunctional rooms. Long-time housekeeper Ida Stone supervised the staff who kept the household running smoothly.

Butler’s Pantry: Emblematic of the dining and entertaining done in the Voorhies house, the Butler’s Pantry was not only functional but beautiful, too. Nothing has changed—it still serves the same purpose today. Its copper sink, stunning glassed cabinets, and commodious storage still contribute to every event that now takes place.

Kitchen and Pantries: As the resident historian tells visitors on weekend tours, the kitchen as seen today defies historical analysis. Its double ovens and cooktop were state-of-the-art 1950s. The cupboards and wallpaper scream late ’60s. Originally, a large wood cookstove was where the refrigerator and freezer now stand—an old vent cover is a remnant. A wood icebox was on the east wall. A large worktable was placed where the island is now. The pantries remain much the same—the biscuit closet on the left has an opening to the outside for ventilation. The baking closet on the right has built-in flour and sugar bins. The bellbox—the

the south veranda and overlooking the pool and gardens, not to mention the bucolic scenery beyond, the sun room was ideal for indoor and outdoor entertaining. Peter recalls simple green roll-up bamboo shades. Somewhere hung a picture of two dogs, black and white, running.

Orchard Office/Bedroom

This humble but important area of the house was part of the orchard office, which was adjacent to this hallway. In what is now the restroom portion of the Ladies Lounge, the area where the lavatory stands was originally the entry door to the payroll office—the sidewalk leading to it is still in place, as is the old boot-scraper. In Joseph Stewart's day, this area would have been the site of the most visionary and important planning in the area, leading to the creation of a pear industry that still bears Stewart's mark. In the heyday of Eden Valley Orchards and the Pear Boom of the early teens and twenties, the property was essentially a village with its own railroad stop—Voorhies Station. With dozens of employees, many of whom lived on the property, the office would have been a busy hub.

In the hallway stood a large commercial scale for weighing produce. The hallway still has pegs used to hang employee and customer coats.

The office was used also by Lee Hedgepath, Eden Valley Orchards superintendent from 1921 to 1971. During part of that time he lived in the Ball/Stewart house, the original home-stead house that in the future will house an interpretative museum for the pear and wine industries of the Rogue Valley.

Hallway, Office & Ladies Lounge

The sink in the hallway was the flower center, where flowers were cut and arranged. The nearby closet was full of vases when Helen still lived at the house. Peter recalls a high French phone and an hourglass where the "old" phone now sits.

The Ladies Lounge, which had been part of the orchard office in early days of the house (see above), was Gordon Voorhies bed-

CHAPTER 3 The 20th Century

In 1899 Stewart sold his property to Gordon Voorhies of Portland, Oregon, for \$18,500. Voorhies was born and raised in Kentucky, graduated from the Military Academy at West Point, served in the U.S. Infantry and Fourth Cavalry, volunteered for the Spanish American War, and later served in World War I as a Lieutenant Colonel of the Army. He married Helen Burrell, daughter of a prominent Portland merchant family and pioneer citizens, in 1893.

Having weathered the depression of the 1890s, by 1906 the orchard industry was beginning to boom in southern Oregon. Local fruit set world records for quality and price received. Voorhies in partnership with his brother-in-law, Walter Frazar Burrell, acquired additional lands. In 1906, with trees flourishing and a packing house that employed people throughout the area, the orchard served as an example for the local newspaper, the *Medford Mail*: "Of the many orchards which grace this little valley, the largest is the Eden Valley Orchard, owned by Burrell Investment Company. . . . [It] furnishes to the smaller growers examples of the wisdom when he started Eden Valley Orchard, now look at the splendid success it has achieved and glancing at their own acres devoid of trees whisper disconsolately, 'It might have been.'" A 1912 report by the Medford Commercial Club (the forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) stated that "The Burrell orchard broke all records for quantity this year, shipping 40 cars of pears from 48 acres, which averaged \$2 a box at the orchard, \$40,000 for the crop. Their Bartletts netted \$1,000 an acre and for the past nine years have netted annually an average of \$600 an acre. One car of Bartletts, this year, sold for \$4.25 a box in New York

City, the high record of the year for Bartletts. Four cars of Howells were sold at \$2.65 a box F.O.B. Medford.”

In 1926, Gordon Voorhies, Leonard and Alfred Carpenter, Chandler Egan, and Corning Kenly established Southern Oregon Sales (SOS), a fruit cooperative in Medford. SOS helped members with processing, packing, storing, and selling fruit. SOS has continued in successful operation to the present day.



The property remained in the Voorhies family until 1986 when it was sold to Edward Earnest, Medford orchardist. Besides continuing to be an industry meeting place, Earnest used the orchards as an experiment station to find ways to improve pear stock.



Exactly a century from the original Voorhies purchase in 1899, the core of the Eden Valley Orchards property conveyed to the longtime orchard family of Robert and Betty F. Root.

Since 1999 the Roots have done much to preserve the house and its distinctive landscape, and have opened the 8,000-square foot house and 27-acre property to the public as part of an educational program for agricultural history. With a focus on agricultural heritage and education, Eden Valley Orchards is also emphasizing Oregon’s reborn wine industry.

The entire property was chosen for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on July 14, 2000.

chair or another was a plush velveteen chair in the corner, where Peter remembers listening to H.B. Kaltenborn on the radio. He also can place a jar of Whitman’s mints nearby.

On display was a sword that had been a trophy won by Gordon’s father Charles in the World Fencing Championship in Heidelberg, Germany, in the early 1800s. Also displayed here (or elsewhere) were gifts Gordon received while head of Indian scouts in the Dakota Territory, including a Sioux ceremonial tomahawk.

Dining Room

In the beginning, the dining room had a billiards table in it, for use when Gordon brought his friends down from Portland to his “lodge retreat.” Some of these buddies were also people to whom he sold land, including George Carpenter and Kenley Corning.

The dining room was furnished with Belter furniture inherited from Gordon’s family in Kentucky. The Oriental influences in the room included lamps with panthers.

The dining room and adjoining sun porch were—and still are—focal points for gracious hospitality. The dining room was used by the Voorhies family for everyday dining, as well as for entertaining. A small bright breakfast room located next to the kitchen was used for breakfast and informal meals for the children and grandchildren. But the formal dining room was mostly just that—the midday meal could be informal, but family and guests were expected to “dress” for dinner.

The family employed a full-time housekeeper, Mrs. Ida Stone, who had help in preparing and serving meals. The dining room was connected to a bell system in the kitchen. When the bell system was broken, a silver bell on the dining room table at Helen’s side called the servants.

Sun Room

The sun porch—or solarium—was a favorite family retreat. Then, as now, Oregon’s climate and the room’s window system allow it to be a four-season haven. The east and south walls can be filled with multipane windows or screens or be left open. Being next to

was handed down through the grandchildren, at least one of whom still plays competitively.

The door from the parlor into the library was closed, covered by a large Oriental tapestry featuring fighting cocks. The walls were off-white plaster, with grasscloth in some areas. Parlor draperies were a simple design, made of dark-green damask with gold trim on the edges, possibly with tassels. Similar drapes were used as the portière on the stairwell.

Library

The library, with its classic styling and book-lined walls had to have been a wonderful retreat for Gordon Voorhies, a busy orchardist and entrepreneur. One of his grandsons shared fond memories of being in the library with Gordon and Helen, and recalls the exact spots on the shelves where his favorite books rested. The library has several concealed closets. Two to the right of the fireplace were the gun closets. To the left of the fireplace, behind the library shelves, are closets for storing wood and fireplace accessories.

Above the fireplace hangs an agricultural plat of Eden Valley Orchards done in the early 1900s when the Voorhies holdings had become quite large.

On the north wall hangs “Neakahnie,” artwork done by Charles Voorhies, Gordon and Helen’s son who was architect of the 1925 remodeling and who went on to become a renowned artist. (Another of his pieces hangs in the dining room to the left of the fireplace.)

The books in the library are not from the original Voorhies library, but many of them are of a vintage and quality that would be emblematic of Gordon’s collection. They were purchased from the Earnest/Naumes family, who owned Eden Valley Orchards for ten years between the Voorhies family and the Root family, current owners. Ed Earnest collected the books over several years from estate sales.

Grandson Peter Voorhies recalls the furnishings to include a rolling file cabinet, a desk, and an Italian chair. Either the Italian

Chapter 4 The Mansion’s Three Centuries

While certainly a durable house—it still stands today, albeit in poor repair—the Ball homestead was not suitable for its new owners in 1885. It offered neither the size nor grandeur befitting the increasingly prosperous Stewarts.

It is believed that Stewart moved his family into the Ball house and then constructed an orchard office (the westernmost side of the current house), which he expanded into a larger home, start-



J. H. Stewart House, 1898,
earliest photo available

Voorhies House, 1911,
featured in a promotional
booklet about Medford



Voorhies Mansion, current, reflecting
remodel of 1925

ing in 1890. It is not certain whether the Stewarts occupied their new house before its completion eight years later in 1898. Whatever the date they moved in, their residency was short-lived—all of Eden Valley Orchards was sold to the Gordon Voorhies family in 1899, one year after the new house's completion.

In 1906, Voorhies hired builders to extensively remodel the former Joseph Stewart house. This resulted in an eastern addition that contains a large living room on the ground floor and front bedrooms on the second. The commodious Voorhies dwelling was photographed and featured along with other distinguished Rogue River Valley orchard homes in illustrated promotional publications of 1909 and 1911.

In the early 20s, Gordon and Helen chose their Harvard-educated youngest son and architecture student, Charles Voorhies, to make further improvements. He chose a Colonial Revival style as a model. In the early part of the century the nation was enjoying nostalgia for earlier American heritage and architecture, fueled to some extent by the 1876 celebration of America's centennial. The eclectic style borrowed many design elements from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, sometimes mixing them together in one building. The horizontal dimensions of the style are often emphasized by widely spaced windows and strong cornice lines. Distinctive in this style are multiple columned porches and doors with fanlights and sidelights. Col. Voorhies may also have favored this style because of his Kentucky upbringing.

In the remodeling project that was completed in 1925, Charles oversaw the construction of several alterations and additions to the house. These changes included a front portico, multi-light windows, south wing, solarium, utility wing, garage, and shingled exterior wall sheathing. The grounds also saw extensive remodeling. A concrete-lined swimming pool was created—either the first or one of the first pools in Medford—flanked by cypress trees. A mortared masonry wall was put up to enclose the elegant gardens. Lawns were placed and segmented by formal privet hedges. Plantings included evergreens, maples, birch, and figs.

In moving to the 21st century, the Voorhies Mansion, its sur-

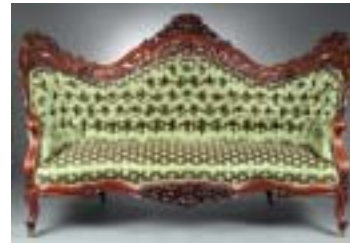
Loo Pavilion

With a bit of whimsy and lots of function, the outdoor portable restrooms need to be disguised. One idea is to create arbors or lattice enclosures to soften their look so they will blend into the scenery better.

INDOORS

Parlor

The simple but sophisticated decorating style of Helen and Gordon Voorhies was first observed as one entered the parlor. Divided into two main areas, the large room had a heavy Oriental touch.



A sofa—a Belter from Philadelphia—was positioned facing the fireplace with its back to the north, creating a pathway from the front door to the dining room. Behind the sofa was a Sheraton table made of black hawthorn. Atop it was an Oriental lamp. Side chairs were on either side of the sofa, looking inward toward the fireplace. The left one was Gordon's, the right Helen's—an Eastlake perhaps. Another, black fuzzy (maybe horsehair) chair was in the corner. An Oriental red lac-

quered screen was angled in the other corner. Area rugs were Oriental.

The other side of the parlor, northeast corner, was dominated by Helen's grand piano. The music storage stand was under the stairs.

The north side of the room was also the "Bridge Room." There was a permanent card table on the north wall in the center. A tilt-top table was in the corner. Bridge lamps were used on the tables. The Voorhieses hosted frequent bridge parties. It's a passion that

OUTDOORS

Parking Area Landscaping

As one came into the lane toward the carriage house (now wine tasting room), a grove of poplars was on the right, where the parking lot is now. Along the lane near the current “island grove” was a fence made of lattice squares covered with wild yellow roses.

Circular Island Fountain Tableau

The vision is to have an architectural element to anchor the center of the close-in parking area between the mansion and the wine tasting room.

Pond in Front Garden

A pond was in the raised area against the east wall of the front garden. This area could be restored to a pond, with accompanying landscaping.

Front Portico Area and Side Verandas

In addition to their architectural purpose, these verandas offer great space for outdoor entertaining. They could have “soft-scaping” to bring out their beauty.

Pavilion/Concession Area Outdoor Garden

The pavilion is popular both as a simple, shaded place to sit with a glass of wine or as an entertainment area for larger groups. It is envisioned as a concession area. It could be further landscaped around its perimeter.

Mr. Stewart’s Cottage

Named for the founder of Eden Valley Orchards, this is a children’s venue for fun and education. Various activities will teach kids about local agriculture—how plants grow and how they become food on the table. Mr. Stewart’s Cottage has its own garden, where children can plant seeds and then tend and harvest the plants. A focus and learning tool will be the honeybee, celebrating its vital role as the magic in the garden and orchards.

Prominent in the decoration of Mr. Stewart’s Cottage should be a bee theme.

rounding buildings, and grounds remain much as they were over a hundred years ago. It is now approximately 8,000 square feet of living space. The maple, oak, and fir floors are all original. The second floor contains seven bedrooms and five full baths. Two baths are on the first floor. Period plumbing and electrical systems remain in place throughout the house, with original fixtures in bathrooms. The downstairs library is exquisite with dark stained fir panels, brick fireplace, and book-lined walls.

The gardens are being restored to their former glory, with their beauty changing with the seasons. The Voorhies swimming pool has been filled in to offer guests a Garden Ballroom.

The mansion and its formal gardens are once again the focal point of a hospitality center serving Rogue River Valley residents and their visitors.

The current owners are dedicated to preserving the mansion’s essence as they plan for an exciting future that will transform Eden Valley Orchards in the 2000s with the kind of vision Mr. Stewart and Col. Voorhies exercised in the 1800s and 1900s.

CHAPTER 6

Indoor & Outdoor Living

From the day it came into the Voorhies family, the new house at Eden Valley Orchards became a magnet for entertaining family and friends. For many years after the purchase in 1899, Gordon H. Voorhies, who resided in Portland with his wife Helen and children, traveled only occasionally to Southern Oregon to check on his property. In many ways, the house served as a getaway lodge for Gordon and his friends.

After the 1906 remodeling and expansion of the orchard properties—and doctor’s orders for a better climate—Gordon spent more time here and eventually moved the family south after his service in World War I. The 1925 remodeling secured it as a beautiful primary residence for a family who was thriving in the boom market of orchards and land development. The house was definitely designed for entertaining and making guests comfortable.

The following descriptions are not complete but merely anecdotal snapshots of the rooms as remembered by family members or friends. While they are not detailed, the notes lead to the general observation that the Voorhies decorating style was underpinned by wealth certainly but reflected an understated, traditional elegance. Some of the downstairs furniture pieces, at least, were family heirlooms. From family comments, it would seem that “simple” was a byword in window decor. And while some of the Voorhies furniture would seem ornate by today’s standards, it was typical of fine European and American furniture favored in the period.

Outdoor spaces, of course, were an essential element of genteel living at Eden Valley Orchards. The formal garden rooms were marked not only by their beauty and serenity but by their functionality. That is as true today as it was in 1925.



Gordon H. and Helen Burrell Voorhies



Col. Gordon H. Voorhies,
WWI

to markets more efficiently. SOS continues to be of service to the valley's orchards to this day.

In the early 1930s the Ku Klux Klan was trying to get organized in the Rogue Valley. They assumed they would find a sympathetic ear with Gordon due to his southern background. According to Gordon's daughter Marian, instead they found themselves run off the Voorhies property by a very irate Colonel Voorhies in no uncertain terms. Times were tense as the valley waited for this period to blow over.

On September 13, 1940, Colonel Gordon Voorhies passed away at his home. The *Mail Tribune* described him as a "West Point graduate, World and Spanish-American war veteran, pioneer valley orchardist, and one of the most distinguished residents of the state." The Rogue Valley said farewell to an officer, a gentleman and a friend.

Helen Voorhies, though a prim and proper Miss Porter's alumna, brought zest to Eden Valley Orchards. It's said she had the fastest pony in town. Her grandson was taught to shoot her Smith & Wesson and she led him in target practice. (The library had a two-tiered gun closet.) Not one to stay home, she traveled extensively with friends. She also was a governor's appointee in 1935 to the Capitol Commission. Helen died in 1948.

Hospitality was inherent in the Voorhies style, and their house was designed to accommodate plenty of friends and family, a number of whom stayed for long periods of time. Helen and Gordon, we think, would be pleased the tradition is being carried on.

Stephen DeCoste is a freelance writer, history lecturer at Southern Oregon University, and resident historian for Voorhies Mansion.

CHAPTER 5
The Voorhies Family

**"Colonel Gordon Voorhies:
An Officer and a Gentleman"**

By Stephen DeCoste*

From the blue grass of Kentucky to "civilized" society in New York, from the Great Plains to the steamy tropics, and from Portland, Oregon, to Flanders during the Great War, Gordon Voorhies saw much of the world. However, it was in the Rogue Valley where this remarkable man would settle and contribute so much to his fellow citizenry.

Gordon Voorhies was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1868 to parents descended from early settlers of that state. *His parents were Charles H. and Nannie B. Voorhies. Besides Gordon, the children were Charles H. and Sallie D. Voorhies.* [Gordon] then attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he graduated in 1891. Although trained for the cavalry, Gordon was first posted to an infantry unit in North Dakota. There he enjoyed the horses he loved by traveling with Sioux scouts deep into uncharted territory. The Sioux presented Gordon with several gifts as signs of their friendship. *Some of these were later displayed in the library of Voorhies Mansion.*

Gordon was then transferred west to the 4th Cavalry at Fort Vancouver in Washington where he met and married Helen Burrell from Portland. Born in 1871, Helen came from a

*Italic notes supplement this article written by Professor DeCoste, resident historian of Voorhies Mansion.

prominent Portland merchant family who were pioneer citizens of that city. *Daughter of Martin and Rosetta Burrell, Helen had brothers Herman and Walter and a sister Margaret. Helen was an 1892 graduate of the prestigious Miss Porter's School in Connecticut. She was an accomplished classical pianist, a love she brought to family living and hospitality to her Medford home, where a grand piano had center stage in the parlor. She shared her skills with son Charles, who also became a good pianist.*

Gordon was discharged from service in 1897, but then volunteered to serve again with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898. After serving and coming down with what is most likely typhoid, he was honorably discharged from service again in 1899.

Doctors suggested that Gordon spend more time outdoors and that is when he heard about an orchard for sale in the Rogue Valley. Gordon visited the orchard near Medford, called Eden Valley, and liked what he saw. He purchased the property from J.H. Stewart in 1899 and, for the most part, ran the orchard from his home in Portland. However, Gordon and Helen and their children seem to have thoroughly enjoyed seasonal visits to the property.

Gordon and Helen had four children: Margaret, born in 1894; Marion, born in 1896; Gordon, Jr., born in 1898; and Charles, born in 1901. Shortly after his graduation from West Point, Gordon, Jr., died from a head injury suffered in a fall from a horse.

When Gordon began work on the orchard, he advertised in the Rogue Valley his intentions to purchase some horses on a certain day. The locals then brought some sorry looking beings to hoodwink the easterner. Gordon, the cavalryman from Kentucky, went down the line and told them precisely what was wrong with each one and asked them to come back in a couple of weeks with better horses. They did so and a local respect was established for Gordon thereafter.

The Voorhies orchard operation expanded significantly with the purchase of hundreds of acres in Jackson County in 1906.

This was done through Gordon's association with the Burrell Investment Company, one of the largest property developers on the west coast. The Voorhieses became increasingly involved in activities in southern Oregon and Gordon joined the socially prominent Rogue Valley University Club in 1910. From 1910 to 1912 the Burrell Investment Company sold hundreds of acres to families with the names Carpenter, Griffeth and Holloway among others.

With the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917, Gordon once again volunteered for service at the age of forty-eight. He was commissioned a Major of field artillery and led troops at Argonne and Chateaux Thierry. He retired from service in 1919 as a Lieutenant Colonel and was awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palm by the Belgian government. The citation for the medal read: "For particularly distinguished and courageous service, during the victorious offensive in Flanders."

His grandson relates the story that because of his age, Captain Gordon Voorhies had difficulty entering service again. So he traveled to California and enlisted as a marine private and was at the Presidio, where the general asked, "What the hell are you doing here?" Turns out, the general had been a classmate of Gordon's. The captain's rank was restored and he moved up to major and retired again, this time as lieutenant colonel. It is indicative of his commitment to the military that he was known familiarly by his titles. Before he went into World War I, Captain Voorhies, orchardist, had a pear brand named "Cappy."

Following Gordon's return from Europe in 1919, the Voorhies family moved permanently to Eden Valley Orchard and made substantial additions to the existing house. Gordon's son Charles oversaw the construction, as he was an architectural student at Harvard University at the time.

In 1926, in an effort to bypass packinghouse middlemen charging exorbitant rates, Gordon Voorhies and several other orchardists organized Southern Oregon Sales (SOS). The cooperative helped members move their produce from orchards